

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

#16



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Brasilia, Brazil

April 23, 1980

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The Honorable  
Harold Brown  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In view of your strong and continuing interest in the security relationship with Brazil, I thought that I should provide you with a current summary. We have over the past two years, with the help of your staff and the Department of State, been able to put in place a new framework for a useful and continuing security relationship with Brazil.

Your approval of the assignment of a general/flag officer as your representative and Defense Attaché in Brasilia was, in retrospect, the key to developing a new security relationship with Brazil. This decision was welcomed within the Brazilian Armed Forces as a mark of respect for Brazil and has now been reciprocated with the assignment by each of the Brazilian Armed Services of a general/flag officer to Washington. It has been a strong lesson on the extreme importance Brazil, and incidentally other Latin countries, attach to the appearance and substance of equality and mutual respect. I must also note that the quality of the general officer selected--General Wiegand--has been an important factor.

The visit here in March of General Allen and the return visit of the Chief of the Brazilian Air Force began the process of re-establishing contact at the Service Chief

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level. The visit here in October, 1979, of Admiral Train had already re-established contact at the fleet commander level. The visit here of the Director of the Joint [Chiefs] Staff in April laid the basis for continuing consultation between the general staffs of the two Armed Forces. We were most fortunate that Admiral Hanson had served in Brazil and spoke Portuguese. Although the Brazilian General Staff was not willing to commit itself formally to return consultations in Washington later this year, I am reasonably confident that the Brazilian President will approve in due course.

We have also made progress in re-establishing a supply and training relationship. We have some internal management problems on handling the increased workload but we should resolve that over the next few months. The Brazilian Naval Minister told me on April 19 that the Brazilian Navy would be participating in an amphibious exercise in the Caribbean this year and accepting the offer of helicopter assistance in constructing the Trinidade naval facility. The annual UNITAS naval exercise is continuing and has, of course, been an important factor in sustaining the relationship.

Despite the progress, it is clear from the DAO report on the April meeting between the staffs of the two Armed Forces that there remain strong doubts within the Brazilian Armed Services about the reliability of the United States as a security partner. It will be some time yet before there is a feeling of genuine confidence. I am very mindful of the need for Brazilian cooperation on surveillance of Soviet activity in the South Atlantic, but I doubt, even in the present state of improved relations, that Brazil is ready to engage in such cooperation. With the continuing help of your staff we will do everything we can to secure Brazilian cooperation.

One further step I would like to suggest is reciprocal visits between the Service Secretaries. Because Brazil maintains completely separate Services, the three Brazilian Armed Services Ministers are key elements in the relationship and on policy making within the Brazilian Government.

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My first candidate for such an invitation would be the Brazilian Navy Minister the last quarter of 1980.

I agree with the Defense Attaché here that the course of action for the rest of 1980 should be consolidation of the efforts already undertaken and positive performance on those efforts instead of significant new initiatives. If we can do that, prospects are reasonably good that Brazilian cooperation will be more forthcoming on our operational requirements.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely,

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Robert M. Sayre  
Ambassador

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